

SAVE CLAYGATE GREEN BELT

www.saveclaygategreenbelt.com

GREEN BELT versus AFFORDABLE HOMES

WHY NOT BOTH?

Elmbridge has a crying need for more affordable homes. Whether it's for first-time buyers, young families who want to live close to Elmbridge parents or those whose needs include housing at social rents, the need is crystal clear.

But must that mean concreting over our Green Belt?

The facts

Elmbridge's own evidence base says that we need to build 269 affordable homes every year to meet genuine needs. In the last 12 years for which we have data, an average of 65 were actually delivered.

In 2013-25, 4,240 homes were built in Elmbridge. EBC's core strategy requires that 40% of homes on large developments must be affordable, falling to 20% on sites as small as five homes. Actual delivery of affordable homes? 18.4%

A real life case study

How did this happen? Well, look at the former Hersham Place Technology Park. The developer wanted to build 262 houses, with their real estate consultant (a subsidiary of one of their core lending banks) reporting that financial viability depended on having zero affordable homes. An independent review revealed that the consultant had used "highly unlikely" assumptions and the developer would be earning a healthy return. So did that mean that the developer was compelled to build 40% affordable homes? Not a bit of it – the developer got planning consent for 262 homes with just 14% affordable. And none were social rent.



What about the Green Belt?

In 2022/23, 240 homes were delivered against a requirement of 647. Not for lack of planning permission, but lack of building.

What about the developers' chorus of "we can't build more affordable homes because we can't build on the Green Belt"?

It's nonsense.

Elmbridge has plenty of brownfield. But building on uncluttered, virgin Green Belt is so much more profitable. And so, at the inquiry that led to Elmbridge's local plan being withdrawn, the developers' expensive lawyers shot down one brownfield site after another until only Green Belt was left. The "need" to build on our Green Belt is manufactured.

So many people need affordable housing, and it's a cruel use of developers' power to create a shortage. Because that's what they are doing – it's a shortage of delivery, not land, and they are responsible for it.

Of the many reasons to oppose development of the green belt – nature, the character of Claygate, amenity and so on – not the least important is that releasing Green Belt will not result in more affordable homes. It will just result in more profitable homes built by developers. Elmbridge's data says so.

Please join our campaign – and sign our petition – by scanning the QR code and accessing our website.



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